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English 2

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Olympics Outline

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II. Modern Olympics

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*The Winter Olympic Games*

The Olympics Games are an ancient sporting tradition that has been around since 1300 BC. The Olympics, which began as a way for the ancient Greeks to honor their gods, has changed greatly over the centuries. Even though it was discontinued after the Christian Roman Emperor Theodosius declared it pagan worship, it was later resurrected in modern times (Currie 8). The modern Olympics Games are noteworthy because they continue to evolve, and because they now include the Winter Games, featuring the exciting sport of ice hockey.

First, the International Olympic Committee has periodically changed the qualifications and event lineup since the beginning of the modern Olympics in 1896. After several centuries without Olympic competition, the Games were resurrected in 1896 by a French baron named Pierre de Coubertin (Currie 10). He was a sports enthusiast who had reincarnated the Olympic Games for modern times because he had dreams of a worldwide competition. These first modern Olympic Games were held in the city of Athens, Greece (Middleton 4). Baron Coubertin picked the city of Athens because the ancient Olympics were held there. Over 42 different events were held at the first modern Olympics, including swimming, sprinting, long distance racing and many more (Currie 10). Baron Coubertin wanted to include sports from the ancient Olympics and he wanted to keep the international competition peaceful. Additionally, so many winter sports were added over the years, that the International Olympic Committee created the first Winter Olympic Games in 1924 ([www.proicehockey.about.com](http://www.proicehockey.about.com)). Ice hockey, which was introduced as an Olympic sport in the Summer Games of April 1920, was now a key event of the Winter Olympics. Several summer and winter sports have come and gone since the first modern Olympic Games in 1896.

Finally, of the sports featured at the Winter Games, ice hockey is probably the most watched because it is an exciting, fast paced game that has produced a great rivalry between the United States, Canada and Russia. In fact, the Soviet teams dominated this event for almost thirty years, winning seven gold medals between 1964 and 1992 ([www.proicehockey.about.com/od/olympichockey/a/olympictimeline.htm](http://www.proicehockey.about.com/od/olympichockey/a/olympictimeline.htm)). This string of Russian Olympic victories intensified the rivalry. Then, at the 1980 Winter Games in Lake Placid, NY the U.S. team broke the Russian’s winning streak by taking the Gold Medal ([www.proicehockey.about.com/od/olympichockey/a/olympictimeline.htm](http://www.proicehockey.about.com/od/olympichockey/a/olympictimeline.htm)). This spectacular game that clinched the gold medal for the U.S. became known as the Miracle on Ice. The current record for the most gold medals in Olympic hockey is shared between Russia and Canada, each having won eight. ([www.wiki.answers.com](http://www.wiki.answers.com)). Canada’s gold medal win in the 2010 Winter Games resulted in the tie. Olympic ice hockey is the highlight of the Olympic Winter Games.

In summary, the Winter Olympic Games are a highly anticipated international event. They are very unique because the Olympic Committee continuously reinvents the sports lineup, and because the exciting sport of ice hockey remains at the heart of the Winter Games. Due to these factors, the Olympic Games will remain a tradition for generations to come.

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